UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/1167
15 December 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 14 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 10 December 1998, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 10 December 1998 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the twenty-third monthly report on the operations of the Stabilization Force (SFOR). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Enclosure

Twenty-third monthly report to the United Nations Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. There are approximately 33,000 troops currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from all countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and from 20 non-NATO countries.

2. Over the reporting period (21 October-20 November), the Stabilization Force (SFOR) continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols. Approximately 3,141 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, with the SFOR helicopter fleet flying approximately 172 hours.

3. SFOR continues to monitor crossing points on the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to inspect government-owned factories in order to help ensure compliance with the prohibition on the transport of weapons established by Security Council resolution 1160 (1998). No reports of non-compliance were received during the reporting period.

4. SFOR troops continue to control the Srpska Radio/Television (SRT) transmission tower at Trebevic in Multi-National Division South-East, with use of the tower shared by SFOR and SRT.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

5. The parties remain substantially compliant with most military provisions of the Peace Agreement. However, over the reporting period, there were isolated incidents related to the return of refugees and displaced persons, principally in Multi-National Division South-East, in the vicinity of Stolac. Explosions at the village of Aladinici on 6 November destroyed houses belonging to Bosniac refugees, who abandoned the settlement. On 11 November, Bosniac houses were destroyed by explosions in the Stolac area, and one Bosniac was injured. In response to the attacks, SFOR troops increased security in the Stolac area by reinforcing patrols.

6. Over the reporting period, SFOR troops conducted a total of 259 inspections of military weapons storage sites: 61 Bosniac; 58 Bosnian Croat; 111 Bosnian Serb; and 29 Federation. On 30 October an illegal cache of weapons, comprising 1,356 shotguns, 70 rifles and 45 pistols, was confiscated by SFOR troops near Zvornik. In accordance with SFOR policy, these weapons will be destroyed. In line with SFOR policy of reducing the overall number of weapons storage sites, 97 of the 136 sites due to be closed between 10 June 1998 and 28 February 1999 have now been closed.

7. The Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade of the Republika Srpska Specialist Police remains compliant with the terms of the Peace Agreement and with the requirements set out by SFOR on 15 August 1997.

8. Over the reporting period, SFOR troops monitored 1,476 training and movement activities: 335 Bosniac; 178 Bosnian Croat; 807 Bosnian Serb; and 156

Federation. A training and movement ban was imposed on the 11th Anti-Tank Regiment and the 116th Motorized Brigade of the 1st Bosnian Serb Army Corps from 15 to 21 November because of their failure to comply with instructions to the parties.

9. Between 19 October and 15 November, the Entity Armed Forces conducted 589 demining activities, removing a total of 257 devices (35 anti-tank mines, 184 anti-personnel mines and 38 items of unexploded ordnance) from 23,090 square metres of land. There are currently no bans imposed on the Entity Armed Forces for non-compliance with mine-clearing operations.

10. On 23 October, a meeting of the Joint Military Commission was held near Rahmici in Multi-National Division South-West. The Commission addressed, inter alia, issues related to ammunition storage, demining and cooperation with civil authorities. A second meeting of the Commission was held at Doboj on 4 November, and a programme was discussed for the handing-over of illegal weapons.

Cooperation with international institutions

11. Within its capabilities, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in the theatre, working closely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), including the International Police Task Force (IPTF), the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

12. SFOR continues to provide support to the Office of the High Representative in its efforts to open airfields, expand civil air operations and establish joint institutions, especially the Standing Committee on Military Matters. On 27 October, the Committee met for the first time since the September elections and signed a protocol permitting the crossing of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line by military helicopter flights for VIPs. In addition, SFOR informed the Committee of its intention to introduce a new weapons and explosives amnesty.

Outlook

13. The installation of elected Governments following the September elections continues to constitute a possible source of tension for SFOR. Acts of intimidation and violence towards displaced persons and refugees can also be expected to continue.